

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the merits of the present application.

By the above amendment, claims 8-12 and 19 are amended; claims 24-26 are newly presented; and claims 2-7 and 13-23 are canceled. Thus, claims 8-12, 19 and 24-26 are currently pending in the present application. Note that new claims 24-26 correspond to claims 9-11, respectively, except for the dependencies thereof.

It is noted with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 8, 12, and 18-23 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of base claim 2 and intervening claims 6 and 7. Also, claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of base claim 2 and intervening claim 6.

Accordingly, claims 8 and 12 are now clearly in condition for allowance. Further, claims 9-12 depend on claim 8, and claims 24-26 depend on claim 12. Therefore, claims 9-11 and 24-26 are allowable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Hiroyuki TOKUNAGA et al.

By: 

Michael S. Huppert
Registration No. 40,268
Attorney for Applicants

MSH/emj
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
October 30, 2008